

To Remake our World

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Humankind has needed something that would put us all on the same side for a long time. It's impossible to tackle climate change if people don't have a sense of global citizenship. It's impossible to tackle poverty or inequality if we don't recognize our common humanity. Yet, it's not possible to move beyond clan, tribe or zero-sum thinking, if we never have common experiences.

THE CORONA PANDEMIC: MAKING OF MANKIND?

So as tragic as it is on many levels, the Corona pandemic has succeeded in doing something that could be the making of mankind - getting almost 8 billion people to have a common experience. Now, across much of the planet, cities, towns and villages are under lockdown. High streets, main streets - closed down. Airports, seaports - running only emergency services. And it seems as if this global slowing down will be the new normal for months, maybe years.

As the world outside is decelerating, activity in the virtual world is exploding, but also people are finally having the time to think about their lives, their compulsions. And they are wondering whether the old 'normal' is what they want to go back to. Because, along with our rising awareness that what happens in Wuhan matters in Waldenburg, we are also realising that the status quo isn't as strong and unchangeable as we thought.

IF CORONA WAS A TEST FOR MANKIND - WOULD WE FAIL?

For decades, we have been told that there is no alternative to our global economic system. But going by how one virus has changed everything about the way we work and live, we have to wonder what can deliberate thinking achieve, too? And we should ask ourselves this question because if the coronavirus pandemic were a test of humankind's humanity, it is a test that we would fail for we have allowed a system

that has left the weak with little defense in much of the world and that system will translate into more people dying that we could have saved.

Something about the moment calls to mind the Arab Spring. The movement that swept the Middle East and North Africa was unprecedented. It crossed borders. And it changed our notions of heroes and what was possible. But in that similarity lies a warning: besides Tunisia, where protests led to a deepening of democracy, the momentum for change brought by the Arab Spring was largely hijacked in the rest of the MENA region, and the opportunity for returning power to the people was lost.

HISTORY IS KNOCKING AT OUR DOOR

If we simply stand by, this moment will be lost as well. So it's not enough to simply think but we must organise around some of our most promising ideas. To put them into some order, give them platforms that we can take forward to engage people everywhere. Here, before us, is the best window of opportunity to remake our world.

In the words of my dear friend and the founder of the Right Livelihood Award and the World Future Council, Jakob von Uexhüll, history is knocking at our door. Will we answer?



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